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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [EG](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [IZ](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR GENERAL GRIFFIN'S JUNE VISIT TO  
CAIRO

Classified by ECPO Counselor John Desrocher for reasons  
1.4(b) and (d).

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Summary  
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11. (C) Embassy Cairo warmly welcomes your visit and the opportunity to discuss with you ways in which we might bolster our military cooperation with Egypt. The U.S.-Egyptian military partnership is the cornerstone of our strategic relationship. While both nations benefit from the relationship, we occasionally differ in the strategies we adopt to achieve our shared goals. Congressional scrutiny of USG security assistance to Egypt has been frustrating to our GOE interlocutors, including the Minister of Defense and his Chief of Staff. You can reassure them of the Administration's steadfast support for the status quo on security assistance. Egypt continues to play a pivotal role on regional issues such as Israel-Palestine and Sudan. On the internal front, President Mubarak has reconfirmed his commitment to political and economic reform, but there have been setbacks in this area in recent months. End summary.

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Your Introduction to Chief of Staff LTG Sammy Enan  
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12. (C) In contrast to his predecessor, Chief of Staff LTG Sammy Enan does not speak English. But during an intensive round of discussions with him during the annual military coordination meetings in late 2005 and in subsequent meetings, LTG Sammy has been eager to engage on both political and military issues. He is particularly interested in discussing how to make the BRIGHT STAR exercises more useful to all participants and may raise this with you. We suggest that you urge him to accept the USG proposal to include disaster management exercises in the program for 2007.

13. (C) Although your meeting is meant to be a courtesy call, LTG Enan will likely also ask you about the ongoing Congressional scrutiny of U.S. security assistance to Egypt. A recent proposed amendment, sponsored by Congressman Obey, to reduce military assistance for FY 2007 by USD 200 million (current funding is USD 1.3 billion) failed with a voice vote but sparked vigorous debate over the whether the U.S. should continue the funding pending greater progress on democratic reform. The GOE has used the assistance, which has been in place since the Camp David accords, to modernize and replace Eastern European systems with U.S. equipment. The pace of modernization has slowed because 75 percent of the assistance now goes to maintenance and upgrades of existing systems. The Egyptians assert that the assistance does not allow them to purchase the systems their modernization plans call for and that efforts in Congress to redirect the aid disrupt

their strategic planning. Defense Minister Tantawi told a senior USG visitor recently that he was personally offended by the ongoing Congressional threats to reduce military aid and that the threats would not increase the pace of political reform. Your interlocutors will tell you that maintaining a strong military (with the help of USG funding) is a national security issue on which they will not compromise and that the GOE will make up for any reduction in military assistance by taking money currently allocated to social programs such as health and education. They will also tell you that a loss of military assistance will compel Egypt to source military systems from less expensive non-U.S. (Chinese) suppliers. You can reassure your interlocutors that the Administration supports the full funding of military assistance for 2007.

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Regional Issues  
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¶4. (C) Iraq: Despite Mubarak's concerns over the U.S. invasion, senior GOE officials have stated publicly that U.S. forces should remain in Iraq for the time being. Egypt has supported the political process in Iraq, but Mubarak distrusts Iraq's Shi'a and fears Iranian influence in the region and in Iraq in particular. He believes that a "tough but fair" leader is what Iraq needs. While we value our military and intelligence cooperation with Egypt on Iraq, we continue to look for additional opportunities for collaboration. Your interlocutors may remind you of Egypt's standing offer to train Iraqi security forces at GOE expense. We have thanked Egypt for the offer and suggested that the Iraqis would welcome the assistance if the training could be done in Iraq. The Egyptians are not willing to expose their troops to the security risks there.

¶5. (C) Palestine/Israel: The Egyptians want to see Hamas fail but, in the meantime, want to avoid heightened extremism in Gaza and the West Bank. GOE officials have pressed Hamas to abide by existing agreements, renounce violence and recognize Israel. Egypt would like to see Fatah's civil servants paid and are contributing directly to efforts to provide humanitarian assistance as well as offering to serve as the conduit for all assistance. To strengthen security on Egypt's border with Gaza, Defense Minister Tantawi has asked to begin negotiations with Israel to place additional troops (Egypt deployed 750 border guards in 2005) in the Sinai. Tantawi has told us that Israel is not yet ready to begin these negotiations.

¶6. (C) Darfur: In addition to sending large amounts of humanitarian aid to Darfur, the GOE has deployed three mobile medical teams, 34 military advisors, and 50 police to the area. President Mubarak issued a positive statement on the recent agreement on Darfur and hinted at Egypt's support for its full implementation and for a transition to UN forces in Darfur. Although the Ministry of Defense does not currently plan to increase the number of advisors in Darfur, it may be receptive to a request for peacekeepers in real numbers, after the UN assessment process is complete. You may want to raise this possibility with LTG Samy.

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Domestic politics  
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¶7. (C) The late 2005 parliamentary elections ended in violence, over a dozen deaths, and widespread allegations of fraud and ballot box manipulation. Although NDP candidates won 360 of 444 seats, Muslim Brotherhood candidates won 88 seats and thereby established a platform from which to attack the Mubarak regime. Mubarak's term is due to end in 2011, but many observers expect the transition sooner. The public fears that Mubarak is aiming to establish his son Gamal as his successor. No real contenders stand in Gamal's way, but it is not clear that the Egyptian military will tolerate the pharaonic succession of decidedly un-military Gamal. A series of incidents, including harassment of opposition activists and crackdowns against political demonstrations

have called into question the GOE's commitment to political reform. But the GOE is working on a package of constitutional amendments, said to redistribute powers among the branches of the government and also to facilitate the enactment of anti-terror legislation based on western models.

It is too soon to tell if these measures will solidify a genuine reform process or be tailored to preserve the ruling NDP's political monopoly.

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